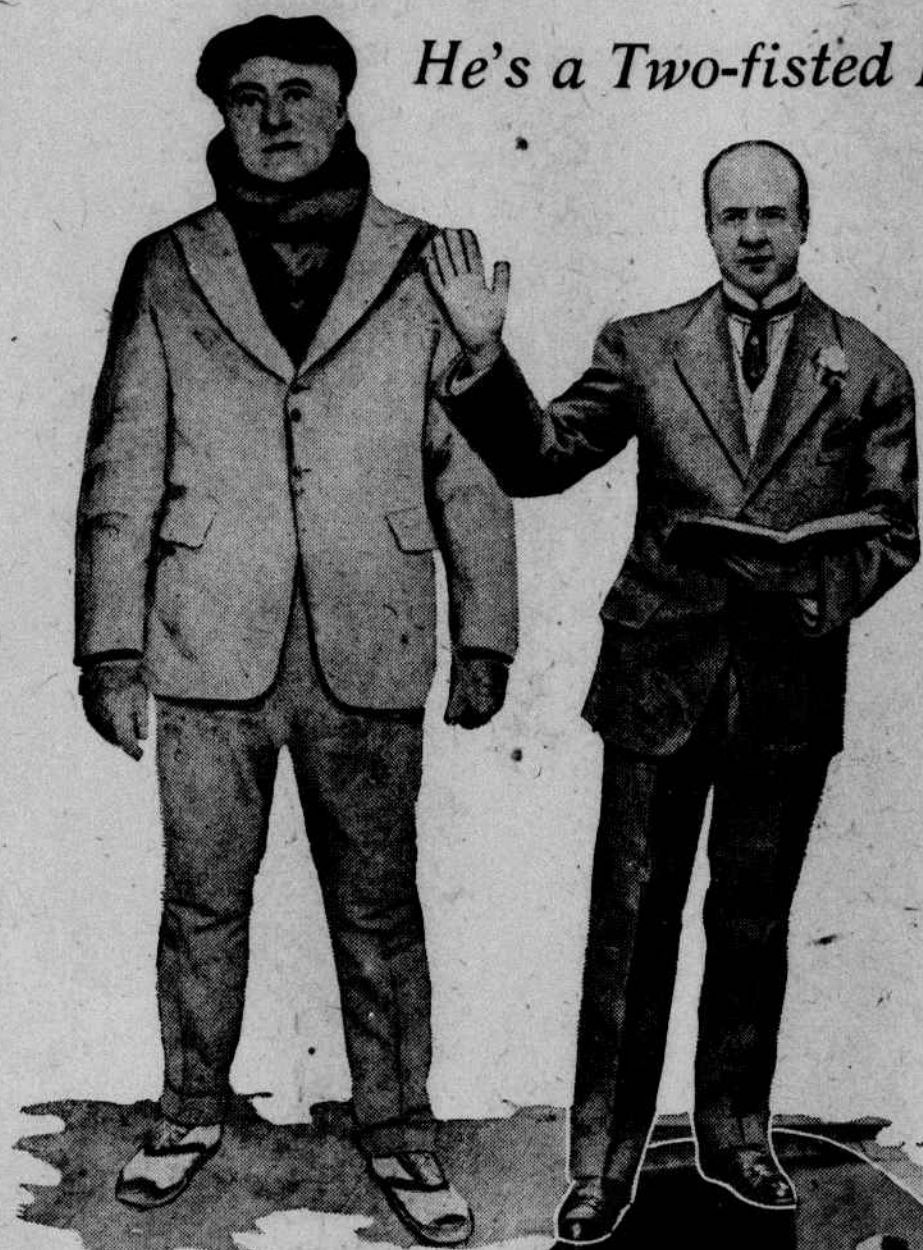


The Man Who Has Own Army, Bigger than Pershing's

He's a Two-fisted Fighter, Too, and Battled in the Ring for Fun, in the World War for Duty and Now in the Church by Maintaining an Organization of Personal Followers That Stretches Around the World



Three good pictures of Major Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Philadelphia's fighting Bible class leader, in action. The largest shows him in exercise togs. In the ring he is, at the right, boxing a heavyweight and giving him a "good fight." The other photograph shows the Major before his class.

WHEN such a name as Major Anthony J. Drexel Biddle is mentioned one is inclined to think at once of Philadelphia and of Philadelphia society. Or, perhaps, one would be more inclined to think of boxing and horse racing and the Marine Corps in France. Major Drexel Biddle is a representative of one of the oldest, best known and most socially prominent families in America. He is a sportsman. He is a millionaire. He is a veteran of the world war.

It may be that the function which he serves most wholeheartedly is entirely incongruous and incompatible with the attributes mentioned. But as astonishing as it may seem, it is true that nothing is of greater interest to Major Drexel Biddle than his Bible classes.

Another scion of wealth and high position is somewhat of a parallel case. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., is also the head of a Bible class. But this prerogative as assumed by the son of the world's richest man does not suggest itself so outstandingly as justification for amazement as does the long standing, but not generally known, tendency of the Philadelphia society leader to take a most active interest in religious work.

Here is a man who is one of the foremost amateur boxers of the country. He said once that boxing was the only thing he knew how to do really well. That which was a lament—was said when he began the undertaking of organizing the first of his Bible classes. But anyhow he put that one talent of his to work, with the result that his Bible class grew amazingly.

Genius and Personality

Responsible for Growth

The story of the inception of the Drexel Bible classes is nothing less than a story in praise of Major Anthony J. Drexel Biddle. Let him say, if he likes, that it was not his genius and personality which made a countrywide organization from an original membership of three rather patient but unenthusiastic men who comprised the class which Major Drexel Biddle took charge of one Sunday no more than a few years ago.

The story begins on a Sunday morning—another Sunday morning—several years ago. Young A. J. Drexel Biddle, a blue ribbon favorite in Philadelphia's blue blooded *Social Register* set, strolled about Rittenhouse Square that Sunday morning and meditated. He was wealthy, the world

was his oyster, there was nothing which he did not or could not have. He should be happy, but he was not. The course of life as he lived it was somewhat wearisome. He was bored. He sauntered along until he came to the portals of the Church of the Holy Trinity. He stopped before the steps and then, after a moment, walked aimlessly up them and into the church. It was soothing there, and he sat and continued his contemplations.

The world weary young society man and sportsman looked about him. He saw men he had seen before, but they were in a new light. His ears picked up the droning voice of the minister. The voice ceased to drone. He became interested. Then he thought:

"What am I doing to help the world? Am I useful? The rector there is doing a great, good work. These men who are taking deep interest in the affairs of the church are serving a fine purpose in life. But what am I doing?"

It was something to think about. And all through the service he speculated upon what he might do to justify his existence.

After the service was ended and the congregation began to file out Mr. A. J. Drexel Biddle did a thing that was unusual in that church. He sought one of the attendants and requested that he be allowed to speak to the rector. Of course he was permitted to. The rector was the Rev. Dr. Floyd W. Tomkins.

"I want to be of some use in the world. I want to be useful to others. I don't know how I can be," Mr. Drexel Biddle said.

Dr. Tomkins looked down into the young man's face, and then looked at the card he had been given bearing the young man's name.

"Would you like to do some sort of church work?" Mr. Tomkins asked.

"Anything," was the reply.

Dr. Tomkins appointed Mr. Drexel Biddle head of the Men's Bible Class immediately. He was to take charge the next Sunday, and that intervening week was spent in preparation. Mr. Biddle had to read the Bible. Messages were sent to the few surviving members of the Men's Bible Class

students this may not appeal to the average church member, but it was the best trick the leader had and he played it to win or lose. He was at this time at the top of his career as an amateur boxer.

So he obtained permission from the vestry of Holy Trinity Church to use the gymnasium at the parish house, and here he gave boxing exhibitions and taught the young men who flocked around him how to use their hands. On that fistic foundation the Bible class began to rise with amazing rapidity. From the week night boxing classes to the Sunday morning Bible class was a transition more easy than it seems. The young men came there to meet their idol. The new leader taught the class in his own breezy fashion and every one was made to feel perfectly at home.

It was the most remarkable Bible class in the world. Famous physicians, society men, lawyers and business men were wedged in the class room between thick necked young men with cauliflower ears. Athletes from the University of Pennsylvania addressed as "brother" husky professionals of the world of brawn who were there to hear for the first time in their lives the thrilling short stories of the Book of Books.

It was not all Bible study, although that was always part of the service. One Sunday a distinguished physician would address the class on "Christianity and Clean Living" and the next Bob Fitzsimmons would give some sage advice on the line of Mr. Roosevelt's famous dictum: "Don't flinch, don't foul and hit hard."

Classroom Soon Too Small And Class Burst Bounds

The class room soon became too small for the attendance and a larger room had to be obtained in the parish house.

Then came the big idea and the class of Bible students and its red blooded leader burst all bounds and surged out to make the world itself their class room. Every

man in the Holy Trinity class became a leader. Quiet, lethargic Bible classes all over Philadelphia were startled out of their placidity by the eruption of a body of eager orators who called on them to join the new militant movement to make all classes part of a great multitude of Christian men fronting in union toward the citadels of sin.

It seemed that almost in a day Mr. Drexel Biddle, from being leader of Holy Trinity class alone, became president and founder of a great confederation of Bible classes numbering many thousands.

Naturally there was need for money. Generally when a movement of this sort gets under way there is a loud call for direct philanthropic aid and a campaign for raising funds. But Mr. Drexel Biddle knew his field. He knew a better way to raise money, and his genius for organization and promotion came into fine employment.

He staged a concert in the grand ballroom of the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia and charged \$5 a seat. All Philadelphia society and many from out of town attended the concert, and the initial funds for the furtherance of the work of the worldwide Drexel Biddle Bible classes were secured.

His concert was a master stroke of management. He arranged to have two of the most beautiful women in America sing. They must have had great vocal gifts, of course, but the principal point was that they were beautiful and popular.

Now Major Drexel Biddle knew one thing thoroughly. He was completely master of the scientific method of knocking a man's block off. As a means of attracting Bible



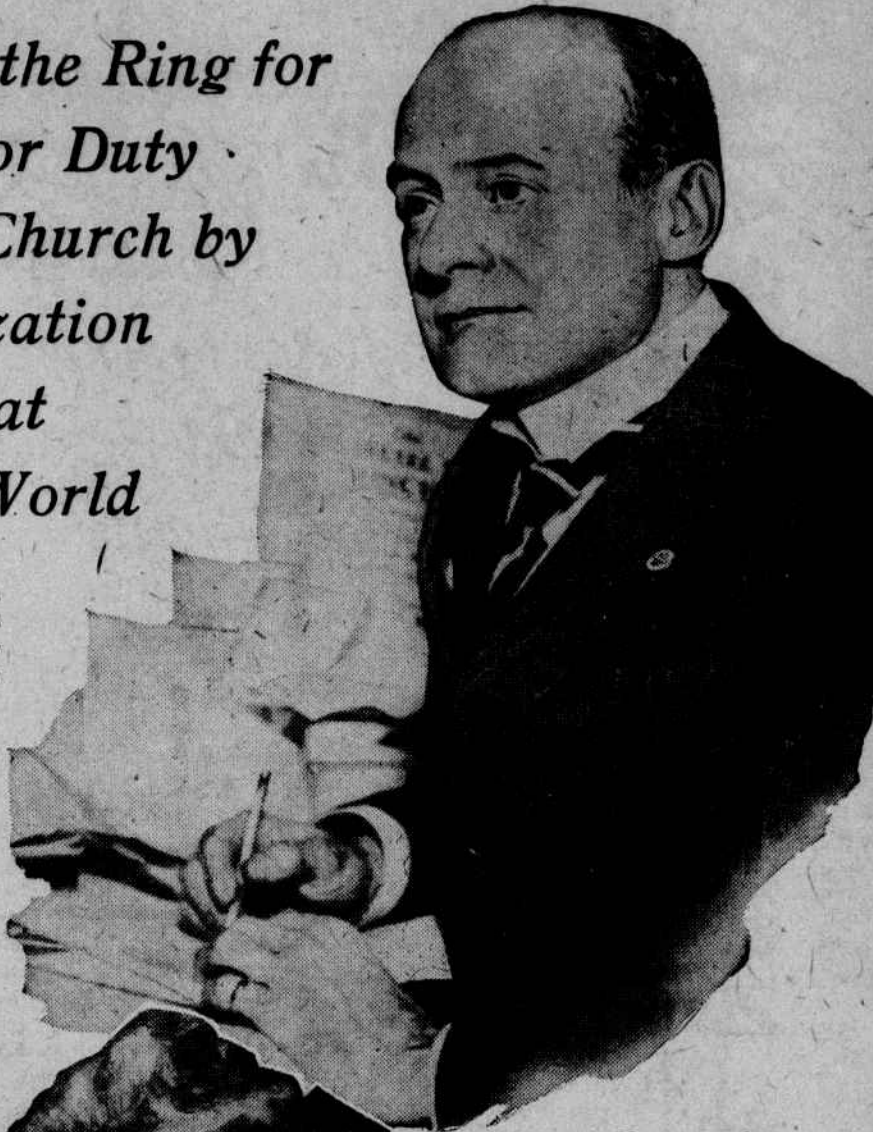
They were Mrs. Charles Dana Gibson and Mrs. Henry Clews, Jr., of Paris, who was then Mrs. Robert Goetz, and who was before her first marriage Miss Elsie Whelen of Philadelphia. Then there were additional concerts, with these two singing and with Mrs. Drexel Biddle, formerly Miss Mary Duke, adding her voice to the volume of music and swelling the funds of the worldwide Sunday school movement.

Great War Work Done

By the Bible Classes

The concerts were the first means of raising money. The leader developed other schemes which have turned out profitably for the organization, and for several years now the Bible classes have been on firm financial footing.

In most stories of contemporary life the war is the great interlude. By the members of the Drexel Biddle Bible classes it was taken as an opportunity for greater service. Major Biddle was a marine officer—but the story really goes back to two years before the United States went into it. Plain Mr. Drexel Biddle heard the mutterings long before the storm broke, and with the cordial support of men like Gen. Leon



Here are three reasons why the Drexel Biddle Bible Class has been the big success it has.

At top is Major Drexel Biddle, the leader, at his desk. In center is Mrs. Charles Dana Gibson, who sang at benefits to raise funds. Below is the former Miss Elsie Whelen, now Mrs. Henry Clews, Jr., who also aided. Many other beautiful society women have often responded to the Major's call.

he took up the Bible class work with his old aggressiveness. At present there are about 300,000 men linked together in this great work. Major Biddle and his associates in the direction of the Bible class work have changed their methods to suit the needs of the hour. Employment bureaus have been established and everything is being done that can possibly be done to get unemployed men work. The Bible classes have taken up the task of helping the down and out in the missions.

An auxiliary to the movement, known as the Women Social Workers, organized from the Red Cross workers of the war, cooperates with the men in giving free dinners and coffee and sandwich suppers to the unemployed who are in need of such help. These women visit the hospitals, sew for the poor, get up entertainments for the sailors at the navy yards and for the convalescents at the hospitals. There are about 20,000 women workers in this philanthropic department of the Bible class movement.

The three original members of the class were associated with Major Biddle in the work of organization. A picture of Major Biddle, with these three original members, is shown on this page.

The managing director, Fred Wilson, known and loved by hundreds of thousands of Bible class men throughout the world, died during the "flu" epidemic of a few years ago. The other two, J. DeWitt Jobborn and Judson J. Adams, are still active.

Major Drexel Biddle was born in 1874 and is noted as an explorer and author as well as a sportsman and Bible class leader. There are few places on this earth he has not visited and his books and magazine articles deal largely with his travels and adventures. His keen sense of humor also crops out in his writings, as it does in all his public service, a fact that brings to him immense personal popularity among those with whom he works.

His family on both his mother's and father's side is one of the oldest in Pennsylvania, and the roster of his clubs is a directory of the exclusive organizations of America.

ard Wood and Senator Pepper he swung the big Bible class movement in line for preparedness.

An appeal to the men of the Bible classes to get ready was greeted with enthusiasm. It was unanimously voted that defense of the country and of the flag was an important part of the Christian religion. It was determined to turn the Drexel playground at Lansdowne into an armed camp. The Government backed the movement. Drillmasters from the Regular Army were provided by the Government.

One of the most enthusiastic "rookies" was Mr. Drexel Biddle himself. He had had some training as a member of the National Guard, but he enlisted as a private in his own regiment and endured all the drudgery of the drill with the rest. A committee of wealthy men assumed most of the burden of expense and many of the leading employers of labor lined up their men for preparedness, permitting them to take days off for drill and providing them with equipment.

As a result, when war actually came the Philadelphia Military Training Corps, as this field of Major Biddle's activities was called, was able to put 20,000 trained men into the various branches of the service, almost every man going in with the rank of a non-com by reason of the splendid training given them at the Drexel camp.

When peace came and Major Biddle left the service and became a civilian again